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ABSTRACT

This publication provides information to art educators, administrators, and concerned citizens regarding new national standards in education. A massive reform effort is taking place that requires strengthening areas and uses the "Visual Arts Standards" as a basis for five areas: (1) developing state frameworks, local curriculum, and teacher instructional lessons; (2) developing art assessment initiatives at the state, district, and school levels; (3) developing professional and staff development projects and renewal programs; (4) reforming teacher preparation, selection, and certification; and (5) selecting art textbooks, materials, equipment, and resources. The document also establishes some of the vocabulary as it directs focus of issues and agendas. The volume includes resource lists for "Goals 2000" and reform initiatives. (DQE)

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A Priority for Reaching High Standards

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National Art Education Association

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A Priority for Reaching

Motivated students. Challenging art curricula. Knowledgeable, well-prepared art teachers and administrators. Art programs that emphasize the application of knowledge and skills to solve complex problems. A rock solid conviction on the part of art educators and the public that all students can meet higher standards, regardless of race, class, or gender.

The governors espoused these values and priorities when they adopted the National Education Goals in 1990. The March enactment of the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* made the National Education Goals federal policy and the guiding principles for a fundamental restructuring of the public education system.

Today, state and local policy makers and art educators are working to make the National Education Goals a reality. They are developing systemic education reform plans, rethinking art curricula, crafting new standards for what students should know and be able to do, and working to bring assessment techniques into line with the new priorities for student learning.

There is more to reforming the nation's schools than adopting higher art standards for students. Also needed are administrators and art educators who will embrace the notion of artistic and academic excellence for all students and carry out new approaches to instruction with professionalism, energy commitment, and know-how. This requires motivated, highly skilled art teachers who are capable of teaching the art content and skills called for in the new *Visual Arts Standards* and administrators who will lead schools toward achieving high standards.

High Standards

Higher educational standards presume a different approach to teaching—an approach that emphasizes the connections between art content and student learning; that places paramount importance on the ability to reason, solve visual and artistic problems, and create and communicate effectively; that encourages students to learn from independent inquiry rather than solely from lectures/demonstrations; that instills in every student enthusiasm for lifelong learning and continuous growth.

Yet many art educators are only vaguely aware of the massive reform effort taking place and of its underlying principles, and are much less prepared to teach new curricula and adopt new instructional techniques. More art teachers need to acquire the extensive knowledge base required by the new art standards and be familiar with more effective approaches to art instruction and assessment.

There is a growing consensus that, along with working to strengthen student performance in art, the professional connections among curriculum, assessment, the preparation of the art teaching force, and the materials and textbooks students use, must also be improved. It is indeed difficult to imagine how other reforms will succeed in the absence of an equally intensive effort to tackle art education in a systemic fashion. Discussions about how to improve this are at an early stage among art educators. Among the implications are at least five areas that can be acted upon now. Use the *Visual Arts Standards* as a basis for:

—1. developing state frameworks, local curriculum, and teacher instructional lessons;
—2. developing art assessment initiatives at the state, district, and school levels;
—3. developing professional and staff development projects and renewal programs;
—4. reforming teacher preparation, selection, and certification;
—5. selecting art textbooks, materials, equipment, and resources.

Adapted from *Professional Development for Educators A Priority for Reaching High Standards* National Governors' Association, 1994.

Student art competencies

The educational success of our children depends on creating a society that is both literate and imaginative, both competent and creative. That goal depends, in turn, on providing children with tools not only for understanding that world but for contributing to it and making their own way. Without the arts to help shape students' perceptions and imaginations, our children stand every chance of growing into adulthood as culturally disabled. **We must not allow that to happen.**

States and schools cannot assume someone else is going to do it for them; individual art teachers cannot assume someone else is going to look out for them. Everyone needs to keep informed and they need to act if they want visual arts to be an equal partner in the educational enterprise and the current reform movement. No one can take the road to status quo or use business-as-usual in their leadership roles. **Inaction is a deliberate attempt to fail.**

There are many routes to competence in the arts. Students may work in different arts at different times. Their study may take a variety of approaches. Their abilities may develop at different rates. Competency means the ability to use an array of knowledge and skills. The *Visual Arts Standards* ask that students should know and be able to do the following by the time they have completed secondary school:

They should be able to communicate at a basic level in the visual arts. This includes knowledge and skills in the use of the basic vocabularies, materials, tools, techniques, and intellectual methods of the discipline.

They should be able to communicate proficiently in at least one art form, including the ability to define and solve artistic problems with insight, reason and technical proficiency.

They should be able to develop basic analyses of works of art from structural, historical, and cultural perspectives, and from combinations of those perspectives. This includes the ability to understand and evaluate work in the visual arts.

They should have an informed acquaintance with exemplary works of art from a variety of cultures and historical periods, and a basic understanding of historical development in the arts disciplines, across the arts as a whole, and within cultures.

Understanding the relationships among national standards, state frameworks, local curriculum guides, and teacher unit-lesson plans

National Visual Arts Standards:

Are broad based goals that identify what students should know and be able to do in the visual arts. They provide focus for curriculum, instruction, and assessment. They are the results of what art instruction seeks to accomplish and describe how art education affects the lives of those who have studied art, K-12.

State Art Education Frameworks/Curriculum Documents:

Organize instructional content that relates to the standards. They break standards into segments of instruction or categories of content. They also outline depth, breadth, and sequence of art content.

District Art Curriculum Guides:

Provide explicit curriculum content relating to local and district school characteristics. They describe appropriate strategies, methodologies, materials, equipment, and other resources.

Art Lesson/Unit Plans:

Describe specific instructional procedures and expectations for significant student learning experiences. They also provide complete information regarding resource requirements for the lesson/unit. They indicate the relationship of the lesson to other lessons, the district guide, the state framework, and the national visual arts standards.

Keeping a substantive focus

Use the *Visual Arts Standards* as a focus for student success in your school and district. Successful visual art programs take a variety of shapes. But certain points for success are in all visual art programs. As activities, projects, programs are formed and proposed as part of the reform efforts, the following three points are central to arts education.

1. **Focus on *art content*,** not on special projects, contests, activities, or processes.

2. **Focus on *student art learning*,** not on special programs, events, teaching techniques, exhibits, art media, or resources.

3. **Focus on art *education*,** not on art enrichment, exposure, or entertainment.

Be informed, inform others, and seize all opportunities to make art education integral to your state and local *Goals 2000* agenda—especially at the outset. In doing so, make connections between the arts and other disciplines.

How to tell the difference between art entertainment and art education

All experiences contribute to a student's education. However, a distinction between curricular and non-curricular education needs to be made. If curricular education is defined as that which is planned in *sequential order* and takes place in an *organized program of study over a period of time*, then non-curricular education is that which is achieved through isolated personal experiences. Clearly, both are components of learning about the visual arts.

Put another way:

The inherent value in any art experience is best realized when it is a part of, rather than apart from, a well-planned sequential program.

Art Entertainment: Engagement with any popular art form/media, such as art in magazines, advertisements, or on television, can become motivation for students continued involvement with learning.

Art Exposure: New experience with the visual arts, such as a school visit by an artist, should be related to the art curriculum by prior study and follow-up.

Art Enrichment: Engagement or experience designed as part of an educational program, such as a school field trip to a museum or gallery after the study of the art form, media, artist, a period and style, is an enriching experience for all children.

Art Education: Well-rounded, well-grounded art education integrates experiences with artists and community resources into a disciplined program of knowledge and skills to be acquired and applied by the student.

This characterization is especially useful for discussing priorities for visual arts instruction, curriculum and student learning. It draws a vivid distinction between isolated exposure and substantive arts instruction. Because each can contribute to a child's artistic literacy, one can be for all of the above without losing the distinction between them and understanding how they affect learning and results for children.

What are some steps or initiatives I can take to provide leadership?

Administrators and teachers can provide leadership to state and local planning groups (at panel hearings) by suggesting and proposing quality visual arts initiatives in their school or district. Following are five suggestions that relate to the implementation of the *Visual Arts Standards*. They may be the basis for strategic initiatives for a school or a district plan.

Use the *Visual Arts Standards* as a basis for:

1. developing state frameworks, local curriculum, and teacher instructional lessons;
2. developing art assessment initiatives at the state, district, and school levels;
3. developing professional and staff development projects and teacher renewal programs;
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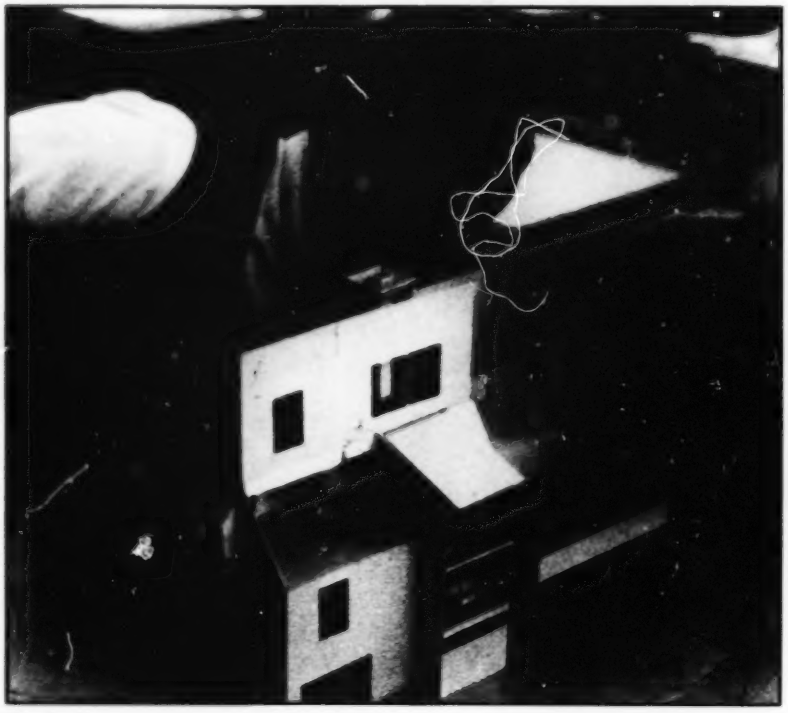

Art education provides an excellent platform for "interdisciplinary" or "integration" of subjects.

"Integrated" projects mean many different things. Unfortunately, they often diminish substantive art education as "handmaiden" e.g., as a way to motivate or a tool to enrich other subjects, often through activities or techniques which encourage only superficial connections between art and other disciplines. While art can motivate and educate about other skills, **any subject can make such claims** and **any good teacher can motivate**. Interdisciplinary projects should be based on an intellectual or competency platform. Several models exist; one example is the College Board Academic Competencies. Following are excerpts as an illustration.

The Basic Academic Competencies (excerpts from the College Board "green book")
"The Basic Academic Competencies are the broad intellectual skills essential to effective work in all fields of college study. **They provide a link across the disciplines of knowledge although they are not specific to any particular discipline."**

"Reasoning"

- The ability to identify and formulate problems, as well as the ability to propose and evaluate ways to solve them.
- The ability to recognize and use inductive and deductive reasoning, and to recognize fallacies in reasoning.
- The ability to draw reasonable conclusions from information found in various sources, whether written, spoken, or displayed in tables and graphs, and to defend one's conclusions rationally.
- The ability to comprehend, develop, and use concepts and generalizations.
- The ability to distinguish between fact and opinion.

There are many routes to competence in the arts. Students may work in different arts at different times. Their study may take a variety of approaches. Their abilities may develop at different rates. Competency means the ability to use an array of knowledge and skills. The *Visual Arts Standards* ask that students should know and be able to do the following by the time they have completed secondary school:

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Goals 2000 Resources

1. *Goals 2000* Legislation (Public Law 103-227) — A 100 page document can be obtained free by sending a self-addressed label (not an envelope) to either: House Document Room, Room B-18, Ford House Office Building, Washington DC 20515 or contact Senate Document Room, Room SH-4, Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510.

2. *Goals 2000* Information Packet — A free packet from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Public Affairs, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20202, or call 1-800-USA-LEAR.

3. The *National Visual Arts Standards* — Copies can be purchased from NAEA 1916 Association Dr., Reston, VA 22091-1590 at $8.00 member price; $14.00 nonmember price plus $2.50 shipping/handling. NAEA also provides additional resources on reform initiatives. (See next page.)

4. National Education Goals Panel Kit — To be published early fall by the National Education Goals Panel, 1850 M Street, NW, Suite 270, Washington, DC 20036 or call 202-632-0952.

5. National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) — For the *Arts Education Consensus* project, *Assessment and Exercise Specifications* and other arts assessment information, contact the Council of Chief State School Officers, One Massachusetts Ave., Suite 700 Washington, DC 20001-1431 (202-336-7046) or contact the National Assessment Governing Board, 800 Capitol Street NW, Suite 825, Washington DC 20002-4233.

6. Other Federal Funding Programs — Contact the U.S. Department of Education for funding opportunities, including application notices for discretionary grant competitions on the Department's bulletin board (ED Board), telephone 202-260-9950; or on the Internet Gopher Server and GOPHER.ED.GOV (under Announcements, Bulletins and Press Releases).

7. National Board for Professional Teaching Standards —For more information on the development of Board certified teacher standards in visual arts, contact: National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 300 River Place, Suite 3600, Detroit, MI 48207, Ph. 313/259-0830.

NAEA Resources on Reform Initiatives

—STANDARDS

No. 216 The National Visual Arts Standards Prepared in response to the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*, lists what every student should know and do in the visual arts. Includes six content standards K-12. Standards are organized K-4, 5-8, and 9-12. Officially presented to the Secretary of Education in 1994. 36 pgs. (1994) **$14.00**; Member Price $8.00

No. 409 Purposes, Principles, and Standards For School Art Programs This newly revised publication is directed toward the promotion and recognition of educationally sound visual art programs in elementary, middle/junior, and high schools. It is designed as a self-assessment evaluation of the seven art education program components: Organization, Curriculum, Personnel, Scheduling, Facilities, Materials/Equipment, and Budgets. A nomination form and self-assessment checklist for the *NAEA Standards Award* is included. 8 1/2" x 11." 33 pgs. (1994) **$10.00**; Member Price $5.00

—FRAMEWORKS/CURRICULUM

No. 525 Basic Art Skills Poster Striking red and blue visual arts framework poster lists the art skills students should develop in grades K-12. 23" x 40". Adapted from the California and South Carolina visual arts frameworks. (1985) **$15.00**; Member Price $10.00

No. 210 Exemplary Art Education Curricula: A Guide to Guides An NAEA task force of art educators presents an in-depth review of art curriculum guides written for K-12. Includes 26 criteria for exemplary art curriculum guides, and commentary on current needs in art curricula. The major portion of the book consists of sample pages from the guides, with critical discussion of their contents, format, and visual impact. The publication is a valuable resource for art teachers and curriculum designers. 128 pgs. (1994) **$20.00**; Member Price $11.00

—OPPORTUNITY-TO-LEARN

No. 248 Elementary Art Programs: A Guide for Administrators Addresses fundamental issues central to the administration of elementary art education programs. It answers questions about key standards concerning content, materials, instruction, and more. The guide also addresses 16 fundamental questions school administrators should ask about elementary art programs and is an important policy resource. It is also designed to provide suggestions on organizing, implementing, and assessing elementary art programs. 24 pgs. (1992) **$10.00**; Member Price $5.00

No. 250 School Art Programs: A Guide for School Board Members and Superintendents Guidelines for school administrators concerning what students should learn in art; components of the art program; curriculum and instruction essential; professional development; scheduling, facilities, and equipment/materials; evaluation; staffing; budgeting; and related issues. An excellent policy resource. 28 pgs. (1992) **$10.00**; Member Price $5.00

—ASSESSMENT

No. 203 Designing Assessment in Art Discusses what can be assessed in art; various kinds of assessment instruments; administering assessment; alternatives to traditional assessment; and scoring and reporting results. It integrates assessment of student learning with curriculum and art instruction. It provides examples, sample formats, and suggestions for implementation. The book illustrates various means of observing and recording evidence of student art learning. An important resource for art teachers and schools. 216 pgs. (1994) **$25.00**; Member Price $17.00

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About NAEA ...
Founded in 1947, the National Art Education Association is the largest professional art education association in the world. Membership includes elementary and secondary teachers, art administrators, museum educators, arts council staff, and university professors from throughout the United States and 66 foreign countries. NAEA's mission is to advance art education through professional development, service, advancement of knowledge, and leadership.

Cover: *Monument au Fantome* by Jean Dubuffet, Interfirst Plaza, Houston, Texas.

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